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Dr. Herman Boerhaave. In Two Parts,
with an Appendix, by William Burton, M. D.

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THE
ELOGE

OF

Professor *Boerhaave*, M.D.

By Mr. FONTENELLE.

To which is added,

A DISCOURSE

ON

BIOGRAPHY in General.

Both Translated from the FRENCH,

By WILLIAM BURTON, M.D.

L O N D O N:

Printed for HENRY LINTOT,
MDCCXLIX.



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THE
H. L. O. G. R.

Protein Supplement, M. D.

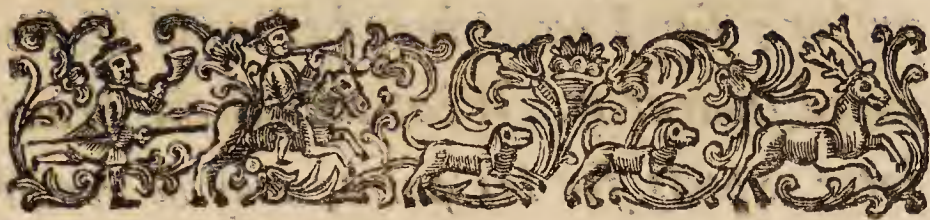
Written by William L. Howard, M. D.

and distilled from the French

By William L. Howard, M. D.



W. L. O. G. R.
L. H. O. G. R.
L. H. O. G. R.



P R E F A C E.



THE character of Mr. FONTENELLE is too universally celebrated for the following piece to need any other recommendation, than that of a faithful version. Had the original appear'd early enough, a great part of it would, doubtless, have been incorporated with an Account of the Life and Writings of Dr. BOERHAAVE, publish'd four years ago : And now, the Whole of it in our language may either serve as a supplement to that narrative, or be desirable by itself to those, whom it suits not to purchase the original connected with several volumes of Elopes by the same

author; for I never heard it could be procured separately. What thanks the Translator expects for his pains, may be readily concluded by all, who concur with him in this sentiment, that the best interpreters of elegant performances, however difficult to translate, have little, if any, merit; that the bad are execrable.





THE
E L O G E
O F

Professor BOERHAAVE, M. D.



HERMAN BOERHAAVE was born on the last day of December 1668, at *Voorhout* near Leyden: He was the son of JAMES BOERHAAVE (pastor of that small village) and of HAGAR DAELDER. His family took its origin from Flanders, but had been long settled at Leyden with a very slender fortune. At five years old HERMAN lost his mother, who left three children besides him; at

the expiration of the year after her decease his father married again, and had afterwards six children: Happy the country! where luxury and an over-delicacy of manners are no discouragement to a numerous offspring: Here it happen'd also, what is too seldom found in some other countries, that the step-mother deputed herself as the common parent to all her husband's children, equally loving, and beloved.

The father, both from natural affection and necessary œconomy, instructed his sons as far as he could. Though he soon discern'd an excellent disposition in HERMAN, his ambition soar'd no higher, than to design him for such a living as his own; he had well-grounded him at the age of eleven in Latin, Greek, and the Belles-Lettres; not unregardful, whilst he was forming his mind, to fortify his body by moderate rustic exercises: However good, there was no room for his education to be expensive.

About

About fourteen our youth was afflicted with a malignant ulcer in his left leg, and for almost four years equally plagued with the disaster and dressings, till he of his own head, when the skill of both physicians and surgeons had been baffled, fomenting it with salt and urine, made a perfect cure; a presage this, as some may think, of his future destination.

This tedious malady scarce interrupted the course of his studies: His thirst after knowledge was exceeded by nothing, but the occasion for it from the narrowness of his circumstances. At fourteen he enter'd into the public schools of Leyden, and, speedily advancing from one class to another, bore away the prize in each; the death of his father left him, when but fifteen, destitute of all succour both of advice and fortune.

Altho' the principal object of his studies was Divinity, he digress'd not a little to Geometry, a science so very different,

that scarce more than the knowledge of its name at that time of day might have been expected from him; perhaps minds form'd for truth are directed by some kind of instinct to Geometry, as yielding them peculiar satisfaction; but BOERHAAVE was at length oblig'd to prosecute this study, not only from the allurements of its invincible charms, but from the comfortable, tho' unforeseen maintenance it afforded him after his father's decease; for he supported himself at Leyden in the pursuit of his theological studies, by instructing the youth of fortune there in Mathematics.

Nor did he rest here; for the consideration of his cure leading him to reflect on the utility of medicine, he attempted the most eminent writers in physic, beginning with HIPPOCRATES, who captivated him in a very extraordinary manner. He did not follow the public professors of physic; He heard indeed a few lectures from the celebrated DRELINCURT; was frequently at the public dissections,

sections, and operated himself upon such animals as he could procure at home; wanting only those matters of fact which conjectures cannot furnish, and which are derived but imperfectly from second hand; all the rest he acquired by reading.

Nevertheless he continued making a proficiency in divinity, I mean in the study of the Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee languages, of the sacred critics, and ecclesiastic writers both ancient and modern: As he was found capable of compassing many things at once, he was advised to *prosecute* the study of medicine with that of theology; and in short, by a like application to both, qualified himself at the same time for discharging the two functions most indispensibly necessary to society.

It must be confess'd, however, that altho' he was equally capacitated for either, each was not equally proper for him to engage in there. His deductions from an extensive and profound knowledge

ledge of theological subjects had convinc'd him, that religion simple, as it proceeded at first from the mouth of God, was soon defaced by vain or rather vitiating philosophical subtleties, productive only of everlasting dissensions and irreconcilable animosities : Whence he was induced to give his public act on this question ; *Why CHRISTIANITY, when preach'd heretofore by the ILLITERATE, made so great a progress, and so little now, tho' taught by the LEARNED?* It may be easily perceiv'd, whither this subject sufficiently premeditated must lead him, and what a sarcasm it contain'd on the ecclesiastic order in general.

Could he with so singular a turn be supposed to exercise that function according to the then fashionable mode? Could he expect to reconcile any of his colleagues to his doctrine? or rather, Was he not sure to involve himself in a general war, and that a theological war?

A mere

A mere accident, without any fault of his, accompanying these reflections, determined him at once to decline the ministry. Passing in a vessel, wherein he happen'd to engage in a controversy that turn'd upon *Spinosism*, a person unknown to him, whose orthodoxy exceeded his judgment, advanc'd so stupid a charge against that system, as occasion'd BOERHAAVE to ask him, whether he had read SPINOSA? forc'd to answer in the negative, he forgave not the question, and found it too easy a matter to misrepresent that man, as a zealous advocate for SPINOSA, who only demanded of him, whether he was vers'd in the author, he attack'd. In short, this wretched reasoner was seconded by the vulgar, too eagerly susceptible of ill impressions, and BOERHAAVE was forthwith proclaim'd a *Spinofist*: Notwithstanding this Spinofist had been all his life-time constant in practical piety, in morning and evening devotion, and never pronounced the name of God, even upon philosophical subjects, without

unco-

uncovering his head, a veneration, which however insignificant it may appear, an hypocrite could hardly have the effrontery to affect.

After this rebuff, he determined to be no more of a divine, than was requisite to the being a good Christian, and devoted himself intirely to medicine. He had no reason now to be anxious about his future conduct, about the ardent zeal with which he must otherwise have contended for very dubious opinions, meriting mere toleration only, and about that spirit of party, with which to have saved appearances, must have cost him dear, and that without security of success,

He was admitted doctor of phyfic at twenty-five years of age in 1693, nor did he discontinue on that account his mathematical lectures, which remain'd then also needful, as patients were not very soon numerous; when they increas'd, he allotted what he could spare for books, thinking himself happier only so far, as
he

he was better enabled to be useful in his profession. By degrees he collected a library, erected a chemical laboratory, and altho' he could not purchase a garden, he applied himself diligently to botany.

Comparing all we have hitherto related, the copious variety of knowledge concenter'd in one head only was indisputably astonishing; what will be said then, should we venture to affirm, that he busied himself with civil law and politics?—There are minds which easily imbibe every thing knowable.—An extraordinary facility of comprehension, an happy memory, and constant reading, conspire to make every part of science attainable to them. Altho' they should only compass what has been known by others, yet they will collect within themselves whatever has been but shared among many separately; nor will it happen to them, as to those of an opposite character, to be great men in some particulars, and children in every thing else.

His reputation now increas'd sufficiently, his fortune but slowly; when a nobleman, chief favourite with King WILLIAM the Third, encouraged him by magnificent promises to settle among them at the Hague. But our young physician, jealous of his liberty's being thereby endangered, magnanimously declin'd it. Literature and science naturally enough form independent minds by moderating the desires.

From this time he was espous'd by three very considerable friends. Mr. JAMES TRIGLAND, a celebrated professor of divinity, and Mess. DANIEL ALPHEN and JOHN VAN DEN BERG, both in the highest posts of magistracy, which they discharg'd with great honour. These gentlemen had almost divined the merits of Mr. BOERHAAVE, which afforded subsequent matter of glory and satisfaction to them, and such matter of gratitude to him, as he always retain'd a lively sense of. Mr. VAN DEN BERG propos'd,
that

that he should think of standing candidate for a professorship of physic in the university of Leyden, which proposition really terrify'd him, as judging it at his time of life too rash and ambitious an attempt; but this potent and strenuous friend apprehending his own interest sufficient, especially when he had such a person to recommend, transacted the affair for him successfully.

Upon being made public professor in 1702, he gave private lectures also at home, which were not only more instructive, but more frequented, and in truth more profitable to the instructor. Such was his success in these lectures, that, upon the report of his being about to remove elsewhere, the curators of the university considerably augmented his salary, on condition he should not leave them. — Their wise œconomy taught them the value he was of to their city by the multitude of his pupils.

Having

Having thus made the first advancement of his fortune, it increas'd with rapidity; two professorships more were bestow'd upon him, and those honours, which are but honours, such as the Rectorship, were not withheld.

When his employments were multiplied to the utmost, he drew so great a number of strangers to Leyden, as almost sufficed to enrich the city; the magistrates had now certainly no reason to repent that bargain, by which they constantly secured to themselves such a professor; all the states of Europe furnish'd him with scholars, especially Germany, and even England too, proud as it is, and that with justice, of the flourishing condition of the sciences in its own territories.

Altho' the room was large where he gave his private courses of medicine and chemistry, yet for security it was often needful to have a place kept in like manner as at our theatres, when an entertainment has an extraordinary run.

It

been written in his science, to illustrate those parts, which original authors, according to their custom, have clouded with obscurity; to rectify their errors, ever the more dangerous, by how much the more popular; in short, to melt down as it were the whole science, when there is room to hope, as there usually is, that it will be more easily acquired in a new form. — This is what BOERHAAVE did in his two volumes of chemistry in quarto, published in 1732. Altho' chemistry had been dragg'd out of its mysterious darkness, in which it was formerly intrench'd, and whence it assum'd the peculiarity of being the only science, that disdain'd all communication with the rest: Nevertheless it is evident, that it was not yet properly rank'd under philosophy in general, but affected to retain some peculiar laws and privileges; whereas BOERHAAVE has reduc'd it to a simple, clear and intelligible branch of physics; he has collected together all the lights acquirable of late, which were confusedly scatter'd before in a thousand different places,

places, and thence has compos'd, to use
the simile, such a regular lustre, as exhi-
bits to the mind a magnificent spectacle.

However it must be confest, that into this his philosophy, or chemistry, so pure and illuminating, he admits the doctrine of Attraction; and acts with a frankness, rarely met with on this subject, in expressly acknowledging, that this attraction is in no respect a mechanical principle. One may conceive this doctrine more supportable in chemistry, than astronomy, because of those sudden, violent and impetuous agitations so common in chemical experiments; but on whatever occasion that term may be used, is any thing really signified, when the word attraction is uttered? He is accus'd * of having inserted

* This charge is so groundless, that it is to be wonder'd, how a person of Monsieur FONTENELLE's understanding could give the least credit to such an insinuation, when even the reading over the books themselves must have convinc'd him of the contrary; or where is his wonted candour in

ferted experiments in this work never made by himself, and wherein he confided too much in his operators.

Beside the qualities essential to professors of the highest reputation, BOERHAAVE had those also, which so embellish the others, as to render them engaging to an audience: It is the common practice of instructors to stuff their own heads with knowledge to a certain pitch, unconcern'd about the manner of communicating it, and to execute their function so formally and drily, as to recommend themselves most by their brevity; but he inflamed his scholars with a real ardor for his lessons, and was not only
punctual

having recorded such an aspersions, which many hundreds of BOERHAAVE's pupils must in justice have contradicted, if Monsieur FONTENELLE had inquired into the state of the fact; for no student continued two years under the professor, but who might have seen all the processes performed by BOERHAAVE, which he has given in his chemistry; and the numerous cautions he gives throughout the whole work, demonstrate his accuracy in his operations. See *infra*, p. 28, l. 11, &c.

punctual in employing usefully the whole time allotted, but never took any advantage of accidents, which might justly have excused him a lecture, always accustoming himself to double the next. It was his care likewise to distinguish the talents of his pupils, and to assist and encourage them in a suitable manner.

He did yet more ; when sick, he was their physician, and scrupled not attending them before his more illustrious and profitable patients. He considered them as his adopted children, to whom his aid was due, and in prescribing to them he instructed them more efficaciously, than any other way.

He had three professorships, and discharg'd them all with equal applause. In 1707. he publish'd his *Institutiones medicæ*, and in 1708. his *Aphorismi de cognoscendis & curandis morbis*; we speak only of the first editions, which were followed by many others. Both these

works, but especially the *Institutiones* *, are in high esteem among capable judges. He therein proposes to himself the imitation of HIPPOCRATES; like him he founds all upon confirm'd experience, rejecting the systems, that are but the ingenious productions of human invention disavow'd by nature; this judiciousness is more to be prized in our time, than in any since HIPPOCRATES, when systems were neither so numerous, nor so delusive.—He appears an imitator of that father of physic also in the Laconic and nervous stile of his works: They seem, as it were, but the buds of truths, contracted into the smallest compass, in order to be develloped and expanded, as they used to be by himself in his lectures upon them.

* The word *Institutiones* seems to have been erroneously printed for *Aphorismi* in the original; because this certainly is the work that shews him the *second* or (by his own authority including SYDENHAM) the *third* HIPPOCRATES.

Is it credible, that those his *Institutions* and Aphorisms should make such an eclat, as to pass the limits of the Christian world? as to be dispers'd even in Turkey? there to be translated into the Arabic language? and by whom? by the *Mufti* himself. Do then the most intelligent among the Turks understand Latin? Would they understand a multitude of things relating to our European physics, anatomy, chemistry, and to what moreover supposes the previous knowledge of those three branches of science? How should they comprehend the value of works adapted to the taste of our *Literati* only? Notwithstanding all this, Mr. SCHULTENS, professor of Orientals, and appointed by the university to deliver BOERHAAVE's funeral oration, therein declares, " That he had seen the said
 " Arabic version, and on comparing it
 " five years before with the original, he
 " found it a faithful one, and that it
 " was then about to be committed to

“ the newly erected press at Constanti-
“ nople.”

A very different, but almost as singular an incident attended his *Institutiones* when reprinted in 1713. He then dedicates the book to Mr. ABRAHAM DROLENVAUX, one of the principal magistrates at Leyden, and takes occasion to thank him in the most pathetic manner, for having deprived himself of his only daughter to bestow her on him in marriage; it was at the expiration of three years he presented this acknowledgment and public declaration of conjugal affection. Such sort of dedications hit his taste: He prefer'd the bestowing friendly compliments on his equals to prostrating himself at the feet of the great, who, perhaps, would have disregarded him. His course of chemistry he dedicated to his brother JAMES the divine, who was by their father destined for the physic line, and was very assisting amidst all the chemical processes, even after his application

cation to theology; they having interchang'd the professions for which they were first intended.

We have not yet consider'd BOERHAAVE as professor of Botany. He was inaugurated in 1709. a year fatal to plants throughout Europe, and doubtless to many in the Leyden physic-garden, which our new professor found stock'd with three thousand plants, and increas'd its stock to double that number at 1720.—Happy was it for him, that by early application to rural labour, nothing suited both with his health and relish of the simplicity of life better, than horticulture and the exercise it affords; other hands might have executed the laborious work, but would have wanted the direction of his eyes. He brought to perfection the pre-establish'd methods of classing and naming plants.

After the conclusion of any one of his three courses, the foreigners, who attended it, returning back to their respective

tive countries, imported both his name and his praises. Each of his three professorships occasion'd an annual flux and reflux of students. Those who return'd, recommended others thither, and often increas'd the number of recruits: No better means can be contrived for suddenly raising and spreading a man's reputation; the best publications are comparatively but tardy.

The illustrious professor of physick, and the good physician, may be divided characters: Human nature is so limited, that qualities seemingly the most allied in themselves, are not always combined; BOERHAAVE happily united these two characters in himself.—In the prognostic part of medicine especially he was admirable, and, (I appeal to facts) besides a multitude of students, there resorted to him an almost equal multitude of patients from all countries, afflicted with such inveterate diseases, as would not submit to the usual methods of cure: And sometimes, through excess of faith, they applied

applied to him either in cases incurable, or too trifling to recompence the journey by the cure. I have heard Pope BENEDICT XIII. consulted him.

No wonder then, that the sovereign princes who visited Holland, honour'd him with their company, as did the Czar of Muscovy and the present Emperor of Germany ; in such circumstances the commoner attracts his superiors with an irresistible force.

The Parisian academy of sciences elected BOERHAAVE a foreign associate in 1731. and about the same time he was chosen a member of the royal society at London. —We may compliment ourselves upon this precedency *, as France had less correspondence with him than England.

He

* The reason of this is intimated in the *Account of BOERHAAVE's Life and Writings*, p. 36.—What has occasion'd the differing dates in these different accounts, viz. that of 1731. from 1728. as well as other differences in particulars not very material,

He divided himself equally between the two societies by sending to each of them the half of a laborious process prosecuted night and day, with a constant fire, during fifteen years continuance : Whence it appear'd, that mercury was in reality unalterable, and consequently incapable of transmutation into any other metal ; such a process suited only a chemist of uncommon understanding and patience, with an easy fortune ; he grudg'd no expence to prevent, if possible, that ruin, in which men are so often involv'd by the artifice of alchemists.

His life was extremely laborious, and his constitution, tho' very robust, was at length exhausted by fatigue. He used constant exercise, walking, or riding on horseback, unless when confin'd at home, and then he amused himself with the guitar, the most proper relaxation after
rious

material, we are at a loss to determine ; for it appears by the registers of the Royal Society, that he was elected a fellow in 1730.

rious or sorrowful engagements; but such an one as requires a certain sweetness of temper, which men so circumstanc'd either intirely want, or do not always maintain.

He had three very severe indispositions, one in 1722, a second in 1727, and the last in 1738; which proved fatal to him on September 23d. N. S. The aforesaid Mr. SCHULTENS, who visited him, and particularly three weeks before his death, declares, that amidst his mortal agonies he found him not only in a state of submission, but of cordial resignation * to whatever the Divine Hand inflicted on him. Whence it is natural to conclude him to have been blest'd with an uniformity,

* How finely BOERHAAVE expresses this! in his letter [*Londinensi amico*] to his friend at London, Dr. MORTIMER, Secretary of the *Royal Society*, part of which letter is inserted by SCHULTENS in the *Oratio funebris*, p. 69. his words are, *Animus vero rebus agendis impar; Cum his luctor fessus, nec emergo: patienter expectans Dei jussa, quibus resigno data quæ sola amo, & honoro unicè.*

mity, and exalted purity of manners.—He purposely consider'd himself in the place of others, as being a consideration productive of equity and indulgence towards them, and consider'd others likewise as in his place, in order to suppress or subdue pride in himself. Satire and obloquy he disarm'd by disregarding them, and compar'd their arrows to the sparks which bounce from a fire, soon extinct unless blown upon.

He left a large, and indeed surprizing fortune, considering with what probity it was acquired.—He was reckon'd worth more than two millions of guilders, equivalent to above £. 180,000; and how could those gentlemen have succeeded better, who stuck at nothing, and set out on a like footing with him? He long enjoy'd three professorships: His private courses of lectures yielded a considerable profit: The consultations he was concern'd in, from all quarters, were acknowledg'd without any requirement on his part, in proportion both to the consequence

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sequence of the patient, and the fame of the physician: Moreover, the plain manner of living he was accustom'd to, from which, without difficulty he neither could, nor ought to, have deviated: His difrelish for the chargeable gratifications of vanity and ostentation, and for whims of any sort: These considerations thus luckily combin'd, made it apparently not his fault, that he was so rich. Men usually acquire wealth proportionable, not to their wild and insatiable wishes, but to their mediocrity of merit: BOERHAAVE's was proportioned to his extraordinary merit, rather than to his very moderate desires. His daughter, and only child, inherits this plentiful fortune.

POSTSCRIPT.

POSTSCRIPT.

BEFORE this second sheet was printed off, Dr. MORTIMER, whose friendship, as well as abilities in his profession, I have abundant reason to esteem, sent me a Treatise lately printed at Cologne, intitled — *Essai sur la Caractère du Grand Medecin, ou Eloge Critique de Mr. HERMAN BOERHAAVE. Printed in 1747.*

The anonymous author was one of BOERHAAVE's pupils, but nevertheless has taken the honest liberty of censuring those Defects in his preceptor, which the veracity of an author, and the task of a critic, allow'd him neither to conceal, nor to palliate.

Had it been worth his while to have criticised on the English account of BOERHAAVE's life and writings, instead of sacrificing his judgment to his candour by recommending it, he might have saved the world from being further troubled by the same hand ; but after such generous treatment from a stranger, it were almost ingratitude not to return the compliment, by translating some part of his work to improve my own : So much therefore of his preliminary discourse on Biography is here annex'd to FONTENELLE's Eloge, as was proper for me to give.

A
DISCOURSE
ON
BIOGRAPHY
IN GENERAL.

MEN of an elevated genius exalt the sciences to a perfection unattainable by common capacities; the utmost can be expected from the latter, is to profit by the progress, and to pursue at a distance the traces of the former: Even those, to whom nature has been most lavish of extraordinary talents, require great originals to compleat themselves.

Great men therefore are useful not only by their labours and Discoveries, but are

yet more so, if possible, by the emulation they excite, and the example they furnish; how valuable soever the inheritance of their knowledge is to the republic of letters, their example is yet more valuable to such as endeavour to imitate them.

Whence it happens, that in every age and state, there is a propensity to celebrate those after death, who have distinguish'd themselves in life; and the different genius of the writers of Eloges on the illustrious dead must have some influence on their works: the more difficult the task they undertook, the less is it to be wonder'd they have not always succeeded alike.

But, not to dwell on this fund of variety, there seems to me another of much more consequence, arising from the diversity of views, and plans, which the Biographer proposes to himself: I have observed three different manners of writing the history of eminent men.

1st, The first consists in collecting the particulars of their life, in recording their actions, and recounting their labours. I am apt to suspect this method to have been both the most antient, and most universal: the remaining monuments of greatest antiquity, as well as the relations of travellers, sufficiently favour this sentiment; and in truth it is natural to believe, that men's first and principal motive was to signalize their gratitude towards such, as had distinguish'd themselves by their attachment, and their services to their country. What more suitable honour could be conferr'd on them, than to grant them a second life more durable than the first? What was more likely to animate every citizen, than the prospect of a like recompence? Such an immortality, however chimerical, has ever been alluring to persons, who had no notion of another more real, and glorious; after all, there are no portraits of men more just, than those which barely recall their actions in the different periods and cir-

cumstances of their lives ; every body can thence unravel the principles of their conduct, compare them with their own, and with the light of reason, and lastly pass a judgment upon them, either according to good sense, or caprice: Great men often discover themselves most in domestic affairs.

2dly, But although this method has its advantages and difficulties, (for 'tis no easy matter in pursuance of it to avoid by a judicious choice either imperfection or prolixity) there is another which equals it at least in the first of these respects, and excells it in the second. What I mean here is not confined to the narrative ; it fixes an *estimation*, and in this regard differs from the preceding. It supposes a thorough examination of the *deeds* and *works* of great men : It enters into a circumstantial and critical detail of their labours, their discoveries, and even of their failings ; It comprehends with exactness, and above all with impartiality, their proficiency with their errors, their attempts

attempts with their miscarriages, and in the most determinate manner settles the opinion a person should form of them, and the acknowledgments that are due to them.

In my opinion this is the compleatest manner of delineating great men: It were to be wish'd that it had been, or rather that it could have been practised in relation to those who have been remarkable for science: since in comparing the state, in which any one of them found the science he applied himself to, with that he advanced it to, one might calculate exactly what it either gain'd or lost, in passing through his hands, and discern with ease and accuracy how much the men of science had really contributed to the common stock of knowledge; sometimes this proves but little, and that little is dispers'd in voluminous works, and perhaps intermix'd with an heap of rubbish, from whence it might be advantageously collected into a few pages, and possibly into a few lines.

It often happens that these men form very useful projects, but live not long enough to bring them into execution ; the fruit they bore perishes for want of adequate successors to begin, where they left off. If those who follow after comprehended the schemes, operations and proficiency of their predecessors, they might proceed upon the same plan, and by continued succession might at length finish, what the lives of many could not otherwise effect ; thus very imperfect works become almost as important and useful, as the more conspicuous discoveries.

Another advantage procurable by this method is, that it directs us how to work upon the model of such of our predecessors, as have advanced the sciences. It teaches us the labour of raising them to the pitch we find them at, and the true means of cultivating them with further success ; we learn by the fate of others the paths we should decline in our various pursuits : A man knows not the be-
nefit

nefit of these affiftances, till he takes the labouring oar in hand himfelf. How many feducing imaginations do not appear to be fuch, before we find, and that too late, we muft abandon them! How numerous the experiments we might have fpared ourfelves, from knowing beforehand their inutility; how many fage precautions have we overlook'd the importance of, till enlighten'd by our own mifcarriages! Happy, if in time we could have avoided the one, and attended fufficiently to the other! And what fo effectual to this purpofe, as the example of thofe, who have pointed out our danger by their fall, and thence qualified us to proceed with greater expedition and fuccefs in the track wherein they were bewilderd: In fhort we may affirm, that thus the fciences would every day approach nearer to perfection, and never lofe ground.

But, what renders this method fo advantageous, does at the fame time render it extremely difficult; and that it has
been

been so rarely, and in general so badly executed, is owing to this, that in all ages there have been but few, who have had resolution to prosecute it, and fewer still, who have had abilities to succeed in it; for in truth, to analyse the actions, schemes, and labours of great men requires abilities almost equal to their own: one must penetrate into all their schemes, prosecute all their operations, and, if possible, collect all their views; nor is this enough; one must pass a decisive judgment upon all those schemes, views and works, and decide with as much, or more exactness, than they have done; since all these conditions are requisite to success in this method, is it wonderful that we so rarely find it?

3dly, In defect of the preceding method there is a third, that of characterizing eminent men from their internal disposition, and of discovering rather what they have *been*, than what they have *done*. To this end it collects in one point of view, their natural and acquired abilities,
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their taste and industry: It represents them meritorious in proportion to their love of truth, their sagacity in discovering, and their zeal in propagating it: Not confined to this, which would be but little, it proceeds further, and exhibits at least in general the nature of their studies and employments, indicates their views and their choice of the expedients they have applied; it enters into some detail, though perhaps not of the operations themselves, yet of their manner of operating, and if it discovers en passant some defects, (and who is entirely free) it discovers without either exaggeration or partiality the causes, degree, and consequences of them.—Our minds admit of as great a diversity of characteristics as our bodies, and let me add, are as distinguishable and as different from each other: Thus, as an eminent Limner, with more art than flattery, expresses in pourtrait the wrinkles and blemishes, whilst he displays the features and complexion of the original, so the delineator of any particular character ought faithfully to represent
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the defects, as well as good qualities, which discriminate his original from all others.—

Nothing is more common than to pass a judgment on other men, and yet nothing more common than to judge of them too superficially; when we consider them in the gross only, and without suspicion of prejudice, we find nothing but perfections or failings, according as we are well or ill affected towards them: An impartial examination of their character and manners detects the illusion of this first glance only, marks real merit, though hid in obscurity, and meanness under the mask of greatness.

Doubtless it is always unjustifiable to indulge precipitation or prejudice in forming our judgments of mankind, but most pernicious is this conduct towards great men; since these are presented as *models* to the public, it would be injurious to represent them objects scarce worth imitation, or to stifle their illustrious examples. This last mention'd method therefore

therefore seems most conducive to prevent the splitting on one or other of these rocks.

We may add, that it might tend to re-establish among mankind that equality and alliance which they are so regardless of.

Providence, that has united them by their mutual wants and assistances, permits them oftentimes to be ignorant both of the one and the other : The dependance and relation of the different links to the principal chain escapes them, and as they usually contribute without design to the common good of society, they as readily enjoy it without gratitude : It must be confess'd, that now and then it requires some attention and discernment to discover the use of some members to the whole : One easily perceives (since none but a few melancholics or fanatics have doubted it) the importance to society of the artificer, the merchant, the judge, &c. But the generality are unacquainted

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with the value of the sciences, and the merits of the learned : Nay even the learned themselves think no other sciences of consequence, than the particular ones to which they have devoted themselves ; the *litterati* ridicule the mathematician, as does the latter the former ; and the public frequently consign over both of them to obscurity, and to the dust of their closets.—To rectify such notions and conduct, nothing more may be requisite, than to become acquainted at least in part with the hidden merit they despise. To see Mr. REAUMER, absorbed in the study of the customs, labours and manners of living among insects, with as much or more attention than we use to discover the proceedings of our neighbours, who would think what such a man aim'd at in such enquiries ? But read ever so little of his memoirs, nay only his prefaces, you will perceive he labours only for his fellow creatures, to enrich them with discoveries and projects equally useful and ingenious, and will soon exchange your contempt, for studies at
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first sight so trifling, into astonishment. To encounter the horrors of a frozen and savage climate with Mr. MAUPER-
TUIS in order to observe the stars, and measure some few leagues on the ice, to count the vibration of pendulums, &c. seems ridiculous to him who knows not, that hence Geography may be advanced to a degree of perfection never dreamt of before. Nay, will any one despise the researches of several learned men into the seemingly least interesting monuments of antiquity, who considers how many proofs of the divinity of the scriptures are thence deducible, as well as of the excellence of religion, and how many solutions to the objections of deists? In thus displaying the views and applications of these great men, we seem to restore them again so much nearer to society, as they appear'd to have remov'd themselves from it by the singularity of their pursuit; and readily convert that indifference, and even contempt, which had been entertained for them, into real esteem and grateful acknowledgment: It
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is therefore to be hoped, that as the biographical histories of the learned multiply, our age becoming daily more enlighten'd and more discerning, will become reconcil'd to their observations, to their calculations, and even to their love of solitude.

From the preceding reflections we may draw the following conclusions.——
The first method is the most common, generally the best executed, and is necessarily imply'd in both the others: The second is the more accurate and useful, but is frequently, and to many, altogether impracticable. The third is attended with more difficulty than the first, and with fewer advantages than the second, and yet has an use exceeding this, and more extensive than that.——To combine these three methods, is to collect all that the example and labours of great men furnish, either interesting or useful to the public: This combination is what most of the Eloge-writers are ambitious of, however unsuccessfully; for there is
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nothing more arduous, and we find but few FONTENELLES.

For my own part, I have confined myself in this essay to the third of these methods; being persuaded the particulars of BOERHAAVE's life were sufficiently known, and not venturing to pass a judgment on his works, I have contented myself with some general touches, which I apprehend to be characteristic: my intent was to draw a picture, and provided it preserves the principal strokes of likeness, it cannot fail of being sufficiently beautiful, nor shall I repent my success, having proposed to myself the rendering BOERHAAVE's example useful to myself and all others of the faculty.—It is of consequence in all professions for a man to have a perfect model before his eyes for his own imitation: Indeed the farther we advance, the clearer we perceive our distance from the mark we aim at; but this is what should animate and excite us daily to further proficiency, in order to obtain a more lively resemblance.

to the proposed original.—Such is the model for medicine I have endeavour'd to represent, and to this end have assembled the most valuable endowments and dispositions with the qualities most requisite to whoever would excel in this art, and pointed out those failings, which are with most difficulty to be avoided in the practice of it.—But though my principal view was towards the faculty, it is not directed to them only, but to the learned in general: For all men of learning have lines of resemblance to one another; they compose altogether a republic, and in different ways aspire after equal perfection.—May these reflections contribute in some measure to strengthen their union, and by shewing the relation of different studies and sciences supply, or restore some motives and assistances to the cultivators of them.—

Lastly, in delineating the pourtrait of a great physician, I am compell'd to exhibit that of medicine itself.—As this is a matter of concernment to all the world,

world, no wonder all the world pretend to judge about it, and well would it be if their decisions were equitable and uniform. Those who declaim on this subject with most zeal, or burlesque it with most delicacy, are not always consistent with themselves to the end of their lives, and 'tis not uncommon on the first severe attack of a distemper to hear them renounce their partial censure, or refined raillery: After all, it is but just that their fears should in some measure revenge us on their ignorance; nor is it the only instance wherein the passions are conducive to the dissipating our prejudices; yet experience does not undeceive most men, but at the very juncture when they are so affected; nor does its efficacy afterwards suppress the humour of being witty: From this contrast spring these alternations of zeal and indifference, together with distrust and inadvertency, and above all this medley of counsels between the succeeding physician, and his predecessor. — Is not this to disgrace one of the noblest professions? to render it

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as disagreeable to its practitioners, as unserviceable to those who ought to experience the happy effects of it? and is not the present imperfection of the art, the consequence of the disgust given to the professors of it? These abuses and inconveniences would cease upon forming a just notion of the nature and extent of Physic; of the difference between those who are guided by principles, and those who act at random; and above all, of the fatal consequences of nostrums and negligence in the treatment of diseases.

F I N I S.

